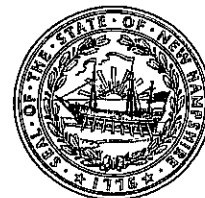




The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

January 29, 2009

The Honorable Cindy Rosenwald, Chairman
New Hampshire House of Representatives
Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee
State House, Room 103
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: HB 126-FN, an act relative to the voluntary certification of health officers by a health officer credentialing board.

Dear Chairman Rosenwald and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on behalf of the Department of Environmental Services (DES) in support of HB 126-FN, which seeks to establish a voluntary certification program for health officers. DES understands that HB 126-FN was requested by the Department of Health and Human Services-Division of Public Health Services based on recommendations made by the NH Local Health Officials Standards and Workforce Competencies Advisory Committee; and that if it is successful will set up a 2-level model of health officer credentialing that reflects the differing scope of duties typically performed by health officers in cities and towns across NH.

DES interacts with New Hampshire health officers regularly on issues ranging from public beach and swimming pool inspections, to indoor air quality and mold, to septic tank problems, to drinking water safety. We recognize that municipal health officers are often on the "front line" for addressing these and many other environmental health issues, and that they play a crucial role in protecting the health of citizens in their communities. We also believe that many municipal health officers would welcome the opportunity to become credentialed and would be eager to take advantage of professional development opportunities that would be made available. Consequently, DES believes that this voluntary certification program will not only define the competencies and training that are desirable for municipal health officers to effectively carry out their work, but will also provide a compelling incentive for health officers to take advantage of available training and personal development opportunities, creating a more knowledgeable and proficient environmental health workforce.

DES is committed to a safe and healthy environment for all New Hampshire citizens, and it fully supports passage of this bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to offer our support for HB 126. Please call me at 271-3503 or Richard G. Rumba, Administrator of the Environmental Health Section, at 271-1987 if you have any questions or would like further information.

Sincerely,

Thomas S. Burack
Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Nicholas A. Toumpas, DHHS Commissioner
Jose T. Montero, DHHS, DPHS Director

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